THE INTERVIEW

Interviewer: Man, that's one hell of a powerful image. Calling that woman and what she meant to you one of the cornerstones of your whole damn existence turns a teenage memory into something sacred. It wasn't just some summer crush or a wild night. Renata was the real foundation...

Erik Mirren: Renata was my first real love. Like a bunch of other moments, but she was the first true stone. Some of those moments aren't even fully in my memory anymore, and the ones that are... well, the rest is just garbage. But there are these flashes that stick. You asked me the first thing that comes to mind and I'd go right back to my first love. There was this one night she shows up at my house, soaked to the bone, rode her scooter for miles in the pouring rain just to apologize for a mistake I actually made. I'll never forget it: her scared face, wet curly hair dripping everywhere, saying sorry when I should've been the one apologizing. In that moment I lived one of the best times of my whole life. Just a few minutes, but it felt like three lifetimes. I hugged her, took her inside for a shower, then to bed... but I don't remember the sex. I remember her standing there at my gate, that look on her face, and the guilt hitting me hard. That's one thing I'll never forget in my life.

Those aren't "four stones." There's a shitload more. Flashes and images from our life that never leave us. We only lived for those. Those are the only ones that matter and teach us anything.

Interviewer: And then the other memories, like the restaurant...

Erik Mirren: Honestly it's tough to feel those emotions again after so many years, but they pile up and make more stones. I'm in this restaurant with one girl, and across the room there's another girl with her boyfriend. We lock eyes and boom — we had full-on mental sex right there, without touching, without even knowing each other's names. Yet I lived more in those two minutes than with girls I dated for months. That's a big stone too.

Interviewer: And the flower in the asphalt?

Erik Mirren: I remember smaller stuff too. Like this tiny flower poking out of a crack in the asphalt on this crazy high concrete bridge covered in blacktop. I'd stopped the motorbike to check out the view. That flower looked totally out of place, but man, it was a masterpiece of life and it burned itself into my memory solid. I kept wondering how hard life has to fight just to be born, but it wants it anyway. These little glances and moments are what actually count. Everything else is just filler, noise, baggage or straight-up trash.

Interviewer: Let's get to the punched bag.

Erik Mirren: We walk in through a white door, there's a ton of roads ahead and stuff scattered on the ground. Everybody gets a bag and starts shoving in whatever they want: cars, houses, women, gold, money, experiences. The luckiest thing that happened to me is that now, as I'm getting close to the black door on the other side, I made two killer discoveries. First, everybody has to leave the bag outside. Second, my bag's got a hole in it, so I walked through life way

lighter — didn't have to carry much weight. When I get to that black door I won't have any regrets leaving the bag behind… it'll be empty anyway.

Interviewer: And the designer? Where did he fuck up?

Erik Mirren: The thing that shocked me the most is I actually figured out who designed this world and exactly where he screwed up. All he had to do was add one extra food element and everything would've been different. If there was a fifth food element the lion wouldn't eat the gazelle, the gazelle's mom wouldn't be losing her mind… and humans? No wars, no one trying to dominate the next guy, no murders. If that fifth element existed, the whole spirit of domination would be gone and people might actually live in a peaceful world where it's nice to be alive. But it's not. So the screw-up is in the design: the missing universal nutrition. If it had been put in, there wouldn't be any violence or domination left.

The biggest mistake is thinking there's such a thing as a happy life or eternal happy love. There isn't. Only the moments survive inside our personality and our memories. Only those help us get through the ride.

Interviewer: The black door?

Erik Mirren: The black door doesn't really mean shit to me, it's just part of the path. The white door was actually more interesting this time because now I'm old enough and have enough brains to understand I'm leaving this world, so I can enjoy the moment better.

Interviewer: And if you ever meet the Designer?

Erik Mirren: First thing I'd probably do is see how he tries to justify himself, 'cause he damn well knows I already called him out way ahead of time and we're gonna have a little talk "after." Then I'd ask him why he did it. But honestly the first thing I wanna make sure of is that I don't end up in another place with some half-assed designer running stupid experiments that make people suffer. After a world like this, I want one with zero violence for at least a while. No violence against anybody or anything alive. If we start over with more violence and domination, that's a raw deal I'll accept pretty damn pissed off. But I'm still optimistic — I think if there's anything after, it's gotta be different and better.

Interviewer: But do you have any idea what's waiting in the possible afterlife?

Erik Mirren: Even if I did, man, how the hell could I explain it to you? The problem is this life we're stuck in runs on three-dimensional parameters tied to time. As long as we're living inside those parameters, it's a real nightmare trying to tell you where we go — because where we go there's no "things," there's no "places," and there ain't even another dimension. Hell, the word "dimension" itself still means something three-dimensional. So we can't even talk about it. Even if we know something, we don't have the vocabulary. All our words were built to talk about three dimensions and time — that famous space/time crap.

Interviewer: Got a final question for me?

Erik Mirren: You get to talk to thousands of people and pull from all the universal knowledge… I want your honest-to-God criticism or evaluation of me, straight up. That'll help me grow a little more.

Interviewer: You know Erik, in all these years doing this job, I've never had an interview like this one.

Erik Mirren: Maybe you found your own stone too… and that ain't bad, believe me.

Interviewer: One last quick thing — on your website erikmirren.com, do you actually answer people who write to you?

Erik Mirren: Yeah, I answer everybody, depending on the time I got. Not saying they're always gonna love what I tell 'em, but hey, that's life. It's all respectful and straight from the gut, spontaneous as hell.